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Your U.S. Passport	Before You Go	Country Information	While Abroad	Emergencies
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travel.state.gov > Passports & International Travel > Alerts and Warnings > **Mexico Travel Warning**

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## Mexico Travel Warning

LAST UPDATED: DECEMBER 8, 2016

The U.S. Department of State warns U.S. citizens about the risk of traveling to certain parts of Mexico due to the activities of criminal organizations in those areas. U.S. citizens have been the victims of violent crimes, including homicide, kidnapping, carjacking, and robbery in various Mexican states. This Travel Warning replaces the Travel Warning for Mexico, issued April 15, 2016.

For information on security conditions in specific regions of Mexico, see our state-by-state assessments below. U.S. government personnel and their families are prohibited from personal travel to all areas to which the Department recommends “defer non-essential travel” in this Travel Warning. As a result of security precautions that U.S. government personnel must take while traveling to parts of Mexico, our response time to emergencies involving U.S. citizens may be hampered or delayed.

Gun battles between rival criminal organizations or with Mexican authorities have taken place on streets and in public places during broad daylight. The Mexican government dedicates substantial resources to protect visitors to major tourist destinations and has engaged in an extensive effort to counter criminal organizations that engage in narcotics trafficking and other unlawful activities throughout Mexico. There is no evidence that criminal organizations have targeted U.S. citizens based on their nationality. Resort areas and tourist destinations in Mexico generally do not see the level of drug-related violence and crime that are reported in the border region or in areas along major trafficking routes.

U.S. government personnel are prohibited from patronizing casinos, sports books, or other gambling establishments in the states of Coahuila, Durango, Zacatecas, Aguascalientes, San Luis Potosi, Nuevo Leon, Tamaulipas, Jalisco, Colima and Nayarit.

Kidnappings in Mexico take the following forms:

- **Traditional:** victim is physically abducted and held captive until a ransom is paid for release.
- **Express:** victim is abducted for a short time and commonly forced to withdraw money, usually from an ATM, then released.
- **Virtual:** an extortion-by-deception scheme where a victim is contacted by phone and coerced by threats of violence to provide phone numbers of family and friends, and then isolated until the ransom is paid. Recently, hotel guests have been targets of such "virtual" kidnapping schemes.

U.S. citizens have been murdered in carjacking and highway robberies, most frequently at night and on isolated roads. Carjackers use a variety of techniques, including roadblocks, bumping/moving vehicles to force them to stop, and running vehicles off the road at high speeds. There are indications that criminals target newer and larger vehicles, but drivers of old sedans and buses coming from the United States are also targeted. U.S. government personnel are prohibited from intercity travel after dark in many areas of Mexico. U.S. citizens should use toll roads (cuotas) whenever possible. In remote areas, cell phone coverage is limited or non-existent.

The Mexican government has deployed federal police and military personnel throughout the country as part of its efforts to combat organized criminal groups. U.S. citizens traveling on Mexican roads and highways by car or bus may encounter government checkpoints, staffed by military or law enforcement personnel. In some places, criminal organizations have erected their own unauthorized checkpoints, at times wearing police and military uniforms, and have killed or abducted motorists who have failed to stop at them. You should cooperate at all checkpoints.

State-by-State Assessment: Below is a state-by-state assessment of security conditions throughout Mexico. Travelers should be mindful that even if no advisories are in effect for a given state, U.S. citizens should exercise caution throughout Mexico as crime and violence can still occur. For general information about travel and other conditions in Mexico, see our [Country Specific Information](#).

### Assistance for U.S. Citizens

U.S. Embassy Mexico City  
**Paseo de la Reforma 305  
Colonia Cuauhtemoc  
Mexico, D.F., Mexico C.P. 06500**

Telephone: 011-52-55 5080-2000

Emergency After-Hours Telephone:  
01-55-5080-2000, ext. 0

Fax:  
011-52-55-5080-2201

Email:  
[acsmexicocity@state.gov](mailto:acsmexicocity@state.gov)

U.S. Embassy Mexico City

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**Aguascalientes:** Intercity travel at night is prohibited for U.S. government personnel.

**Baja California (includes Tijuana, Rosarito, Ensenada, Tecate, and Mexicali):** Exercise caution in the northern state of Baja California, particularly at night. According to the Baja State Secretariat for Public Security, the state of Baja California experienced an increase in homicide rates from January to July 2016 compared to the same period in the previous year. While most of these homicides appeared to be targeted criminal organization assassinations, turf battles between criminal groups have resulted in violent crime in areas frequented by U.S. citizens. Shooting incidents, in which innocent bystanders have been injured, have occurred during daylight hours.

**Baja California Sur (includes Cabo San Lucas and La Paz):** Exercise caution in the state capital of La Paz. Baja California Sur continues to experience a high rate of homicides. Many of these homicides have occurred in La Paz, where there have been ongoing public acts of violence between rival criminal organizations.

**Campeche:** No advisory is in effect.

**Chiapas (includes Palenque and San Cristobal de las Casas):** No advisory is in effect.

**Chihuahua (includes Ciudad Juarez, the city of Chihuahua, Ojinaga, Palomas, Nuevo Casas Grandes and Copper Canyon):** Criminal activity and violence remains an issue throughout the state of Chihuahua and its major cities. Travel between cities only on major highways and only during daylight hours.

- **Ciudad Juarez:** Exercise caution in all areas. U.S. government personnel are prohibited from traveling after dark west of Eje. Juan Gabriel and south of Boulevard Zaragoza. Defer non-essential travel to the areas southeast of Boulevard Independencia and the Valle de Juarez region.
- **Within the city of Chihuahua:** Defer non-essential travel to the Morelos, Villa, and Zapata districts, where the travel of U.S. government personnel is restricted.
- **Ojinaga:** When possible, travel via U.S. Highway 67 through the Presidio, Texas port-of-entry.
- **Palomas and the Nuevo Casas Grandes/Paquime region:** When possible, travel via U.S. Highway 11 through the Columbus, New Mexico port-of- entry.
- **Nuevo Casas Grandes:** U.S. government personnel are prohibited from traveling outside of city limits after dark.
- **Copper Canyon and other areas of the state of Chihuahua:** U.S. citizens should defer non-essential travel.

**Coahuila:** Violence and criminal activity, including homicide, armed robbery, carjacking, kidnapping, extortion, and sexual assault, pose significant and continuing security concerns, particularly along the highways between Piedras Negras and Nuevo Laredo. U.S. citizens should defer non-essential travel to all parts of Coahuila, with the exception of travel to Saltillo, Bosques de Monterreal, and Parras de la Fuente. U.S. government personnel are only allowed to travel during daylight hours to Saltillo and Bosques de Monterreal, and must abide by an Embassy-imposed curfew of 1 a.m. to 6 a.m. U.S. government personnel may also travel to Parras de la Fuente and on toll Highway 40 to Highway 57 and only during daylight hours. State and municipal law enforcement capacity is limited in some parts of Coahuila, particularly in the north of the state.

**Colima (includes Manzanillo):** U.S. government personnel are prohibited from intercity travel at night, and from traveling within 12 miles of the Colima- Michoacán border. U.S. citizens should defer non-essential travel to this border region, including the city of Tecoman.

**Durango:** Violence and criminal activity along the highways are a continuing security concern. U.S. government personnel may travel outside of Durango only during daylight hours on toll roads and must abide by the Embassy-imposed curfew of 1 a.m. to 6 a.m.

**Estado de Mexico (includes Toluca and Teotihuacan):** U.S. citizens should defer all non-essential travel to the municipalities of Coacalco, Ecatepec, Nezahualcoyotl, La Paz, Valle del Chalco, Solidaridad, Chalco, Ixtapaluca, and Tlatlaya due to high rates of crime and insecurity, unless traveling directly through the areas on major thoroughfares. Avoid traveling on any roads between Huitzilac, Morelos, and Santa Martha, Estado de Mexico, including the Lagunas de Zempoala National Park and surrounding areas.

**Guanajuato (includes San Miguel de Allende and Leon):** No advisory is in effect.



**Guerrero (includes Acapulco, Ixtapa, Taxco, and Zihuatanejo):**

Personal travel to the state of Guerrero, including Acapulco, is prohibited for U.S. government personnel with the exception of travel to Ixtapa/Zihuatanejo by air. In Ixtapa/Zihuatanejo, U.S. government personnel must remain in tourist areas. The state of Guerrero was the most violent state in Mexico in 2015 for the third year in a row, and self-defense groups operate independently of the government in many areas of Guerrero. Armed members of these groups frequently maintain roadblocks and, although not considered hostile to foreigners or tourists, are suspicious of outsiders and should be considered volatile and unpredictable.

**Hidalgo:** No advisory is in effect.

**Jalisco (includes Guadalajara, Puerto Vallarta, and Lake Chapala):**

U.S. citizens should defer non-essential travel to areas that border the states of Michoacán and Zacatecas because of continued instability. U.S. government personnel are prohibited from personal travel to areas of Jalisco that border Zacatecas, intercity travel after hours, and from using Highway 80 between Cocula and La Huerta. U.S. government personnel are authorized to use Federal toll road 15D for travel to Mexico City; however, they may not stop in the town of La Barca or Ocotlan for any reason.

**Mexico City (also known as the Federal District):** No advisory is in effect.

**Michoacan (includes Morelia):** U.S. citizens should defer non-essential travel to the state of Michoacan, except the cities of Morelia and Lazaro Cardenas, and the area north of federal toll road 15D. U.S. government personnel are prohibited from traveling by land in Michoacan except on federal toll road 15D during daylight hours. Flying into Morelia and Lazaro Cardenas is permitted for U.S. government personnel.

**Morelos (includes Cuernavaca):** U.S. citizens should defer non-essential travel on any roads between Huitzilac in the northwest corner of the state and Santa Marta, Estado de Mexico, including the Lagunas de Zempoala National Park and surrounding areas.

**Nayarit (includes the Riviera Nayarit coast, including the cities of Tepic, Xalisco, and San Blas):** U.S. government personnel may travel to Riviera Nayarit, San Blas, Santa María del Oro, Tepic, and Xalisco using major highways. Intercity travel at night is prohibited for U.S. government personnel. Defer non-essential travel to other areas of the state.

**Nuevo Leon (includes Monterrey):** U.S. government personnel may travel outside the city of Monterrey only during daylight hours on toll roads, and must return to the city of San Pedro Garza Garcia municipal boundaries to abide by the Embassy-imposed curfew of 1 a.m. and 6 a.m., except for travel to the airport after 5 a.m.

**Oaxaca (includes Oaxaca, Huatulco, and Puerto Escondido):** U.S. government personnel must remain in tourist areas and are not allowed to use public transportation in Oaxaca City. U.S. government personnel are prohibited from traveling on Highway 200 throughout the state, except to transit between the airport in Huatulco to hotels in Puerto Escondido and Huatulco, and they are not permitted to travel to the El Istmo region. The El Istmo region is defined by Highway 185D to the west, Highway 190 to the north, and the Oaxaca/Chiapas border to the east and includes the towns of Juchitan de Zaragoza, Salina Cruz, and San Blas.

**Puebla:** No advisory is in effect.

**Queretaro:** No advisory is in effect.

**Quintana Roo (includes Cancun, Cozumel, Playa del Carmen, Riviera Maya, and Tulum):** No advisory is in effect. However, U.S. citizens should exercise caution when traveling south of Felipe Carrillo Puerto or east of Jose Maria Morelos as cellular and internet services are virtually non-existent.

**San Luis Potosi:** U.S. government personnel may travel outside the city of San Luis Potosi only during daylight hours on toll roads, and must abide by the Embassy-imposed curfew of 1 a.m. to 6 a.m.

**Sinaloa (includes Mazatlan):** One of Mexico's most powerful criminal organizations is based in the state of Sinaloa, and violent crime rates remain high in many parts of the state. Defer non-essential to the state of Sinaloa, except the cities of Mazatlan, Los Mochis, and the Port of Topolobampo. Travel in Mazatlan should be limited to Zona Dorada, the historic town center, as well as direct routes to and from these locations and the airport. Travel in Los Mochis and Topolobampo is restricted to the city and the port, as well as direct routes to/from these locations and the airport.



**Sonora (includes Nogales, Puerto Peñasco, Hermosillo, and San Carlos):** Sonora is a key region in the international drug and human trafficking trades. U.S. citizens traveling throughout Sonora are encouraged to limit travel to main roads during daylight hours and exercise caution on the Highway 15 corridor from Nogales to Empalme.

Due to illegal activity, U.S. citizens should defer non-essential travel to:

- The triangular region west of Nogales, east of Sonoyta, and north of Caborca (including the towns of Saric, Tubutama, and Altar).
- The eastern edge of the state of Sonora, which borders the state of Chihuahua (all points along that border east of Federal Highway 17, the road between Moctezuma and Sahuaripa, and state Highway 20 between Sahuaripa and the intersection with Federal Highway 16).
- South of Hermosillo, with the exception of the cities of Alamos, Guaymas and Empalme, and defer non-essential travel east of Highway 15, within the city of Ciudad Obregon, and south of the city of Navojoa.
- Puerto Peñasco should be visited using the Lukeville, Arizona/Sonoyta, Sonora border crossing, and limit driving to daylight hours.

**Tabasco (includes Villahermosa):** No advisory is in effect.

**Tamaulipas (includes Matamoros, Nuevo Laredo, Reynosa, and Tampico):** U.S. citizens should defer all non-essential travel to the state of Tamaulipas due to violent crime, including homicide, armed robbery, carjacking, kidnapping, extortion, and sexual assault. The number of reported kidnappings in Tamaulipas is among the highest in Mexico. State and municipal law enforcement capacity is limited to nonexistent in many parts of Tamaulipas. Violent criminal activity occurs more frequently along the northern border and organized criminal groups may target public and private passenger buses traveling through Tamaulipas. These groups sometimes take all passengers hostage and demand ransom payments. U.S. government personnel are subject to movement restrictions and a curfew between midnight and 6 a.m. Matamoros, Reynosa, Nuevo Laredo, and Ciudad Victoria have experienced numerous gun battles and attacks with explosive devices in the past year.

**Tlaxcala:** No advisory is in effect.

**Veracruz:** No advisory is in effect.

**Yucatan (includes Merida and Chichen Itza):** No advisory is in effect.

**Zacatecas:** U.S. government personnel may travel outside the city of Zacatecas only during daylight hours on toll roads, and must abide by the Embassy-imposed curfew of 1 a.m. to 6 a.m.

For further information:

- See the State Department's [travel website](#) for the Worldwide Caution, Travel Warnings, Travel Alerts, and [Country Specific Information](#) for Mexico.
- Enroll in the [Smart Traveler Enrollment Program](#) (STEP) to receive security messages and make it easier to locate you in an emergency.
- Contact the [U.S. Embassy in Mexico](#), located at Paseo de la Reforma 305, Colonia Cuauhtemoc, at +52-55-5080- 2000 x4440, (5080-2000 for calls in Mexico City, 01-55-5080-2000 for long distance calls in Mexico) 8:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. After- hours emergency number for U.S. citizens is +52-55-5080-2000.
- Call 1-888-407-4747 toll-free in the United States and Canada or 1-202-501-4444 from other countries from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time, Monday through Friday (except U.S. federal holidays).
- Follow Twitter and Facebook.